

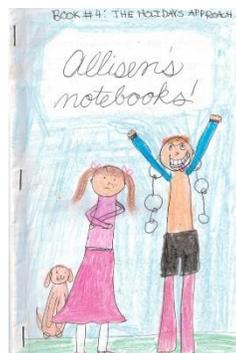
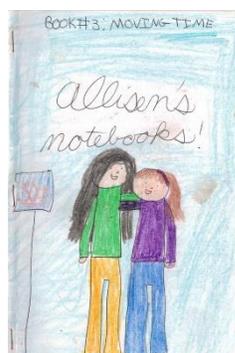
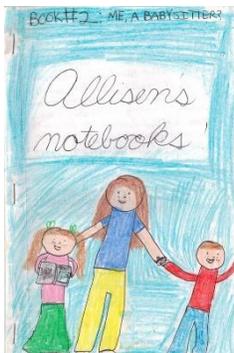
From the Author: “I started writing Allisen’s Notebooks when I was eleven. I used to love stapling together sheets of folded printer paper and making little books, and one day I decided I wanted to write a series. My brother and I had a detailed world of imaginary friends at the time, and one of these friends was an eight-year-old genius named Mirisen Zepetto.

She had a crazy older brother named Pete, a relatively normal older sister named Allisen, and a younger brother named Harrison. I decided Allisen would make a good protagonist for my series, and a good plot for the first book would be Allisen starting at a new school and having both Mirisen and Pete in her class!



Writing Prompt 1: Develop a character. How old is he/she? Where does he/she live? What are this character’s likes and dislikes? What is this character looking forward to, and what is he/she afraid of?

I titled the first book “School Starts,” and made up titles for the next three: “Me, A Babysitter?” “Moving Time” and “The Holidays Approach.” I was very excited about the series, so all of those books came quickly. Over the next several years, I kept writing Allisen’s Notebooks, bringing Allisen through her entire sixth grade year, and



then on to seventh grade, and then on to eighth. My plot ideas sometimes came from events in my own life, and other times were inspired by other books or just by concepts I thought would be interesting.

Original Allisen’s Notebook Covers

Writing Prompt 2: Think of a situation that would be interesting to put your character in. It could be something you've experienced, or it could be something you've never experienced that you think would be interesting to read or write about. How would your character react to that situation? What would he or she do?

Writing Prompt 3: As a story progresses, you learn more about the world the story takes place in, and you usually meet new characters. **Think of some other characters you'd like to include in your story. What will their interactions with your main character be like?** Are they friends? Family members? Enemies? Mysterious strangers? Will their relationship with your main character change at all throughout the story?



I'd started out writing the series purely for my own enjoyment, but when I was twenty, I decided I wanted to share the stories with others. By this time, I'd written over forty-five Allisen's Notebooks, and still had plans for more. I didn't think that the books were long enough to publish separately, so I combined the first twelve into a single volume about Allisen's sixth-grade school year. Each previous "book" became a chapter.



There was a lot of editing involved before the books were ready to be published. Some of the plot ideas that had made perfect sense to eleven-year-old me seemed strange and implausible to twenty-year-old me. I re-wrote large chunks of each story, adding more details and making the events more realistic. There were some parts that I kept the same, though—there's nothing more authentic than a book actually written by someone the same age as the main character!

Writing Prompt 4: Look over what you've come up with in regards to your main character, the situations he or she may face, and the other characters that may appear in the story. **Is there anything you want to change, or any more details you want to add? (It's okay if you're already satisfied with it the way it is, but read through what you have just to make sure!)**